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ACTION: PAO  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 002972

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA; INR/NESA; INR/B;  
RRU-NEA  
IIP/G/NEA-SA  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC  
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA  
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD  
LONDON FOR MCKUNE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CRISIS IN LEBANON

¶1. Summary: An article in "Al-Bayan" accused the U.S. of supporting Israel against its own interests, while another criticized President Bush's hypocrisy in calling for Israel to preserve the Lebanese government while demolishing the state. An article in "Al-Khaleej" draws comparisons between current actions being taken by the international community and those pursued in 1982, which paved the way for an Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Another compared the Lebanese resistance to those that resisted Nazism and colonialism. A third noted that Lebanon should put aside its sectarian identities, as Israeli attacks do not make such distinctions. A fourth article in "Al-Khaleej" criticized Senator Hillary Clinton for defending Israel and claiming that the Israelis "represent American values." A columnist in semi-official "Al-Ittihad," questions who exactly Hezbollah is fighting for, as many in Lebanon and elsewhere blame them for the current violence. Another columnist criticized Hezbollah's actions as a huge strategic mistake. Finally, a third columnist in "Al-Ittihad" urged the world to end Israel's aggression, noting that their actions stood in blatant violation of international laws on war crimes. End Summary.

¶2. Under the headline "US fueling Israeli aggression?", the Dubai-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Bayan" (circulation 85,000) published the following in a 07/19 lead editorial:

"Today's events are an extension of what has been U.S. policy in the

region for decades. Israel is acting aggressively with American support, as it did in 1967 and 1982. It is using its international position to protect and encourage Israeli aggression... This stance harms U.S. interests in the region, as it increases the magnitude of global anti-Americanism particularly among Arab and Muslim populations, and aggravates the continuing tide of violence that is facing U.S. activities around the world... This is a dirty war, but the dirt in this case belongs to Israel. One would hope that the Bush administration would realize this, instead of merely drifting towards policies of blind support for Israel. The United States should revise its policies to support justice instead of Israeli aggression, otherwise it might lose everything."

13. Bahraini columnist, Abdul-Jalil Al-Noaimi, wrote under the headline "Freeing prisoners or applying strategies of destruction?", in a 07/19 editorial in the Dubai-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Bayan," (circulation 85,000):

"Israel would not have done all this without the blessing of George Bush, the man who has declared the war within Israel's legitimate rights of self-defense, condemned Hezbollah and promised to continue his cooperation with Israel. His only advice to Israel? Don't destroy Lebanon's new democracy. But what democracy can await a country that has just emerged from half a century of conflict, just to be dragged into a new war?"

14. Under the headline "From Philip Habib to Larson", the Sharjah-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000) published the following a 07/19 lead editorial:

"An international delegation including Terje Rod-Larson, a known friend of Israel, has started work on Lebanon, the Arab country which has been abandoned in the face of a tsunami of Israeli aggression. Such a move resembles the actions of U.S. diplomat Philip Habib in 1982, when he collaborated with Israel to render Lebanon its protectorate. Lebanon is expected to raise the white flag and surrender, apologizing to Israel and the United States for resisting and not normalizing relations with Israel... The objectives of Israel and the U.S. are well-known. Only the unity of the Lebanese can stop them from achieving their wicked goals. Lebanon, which refused to surrender in 1978, in 1982 and throughout later attacks and massacres, will only foil their enemies' efforts through their peoples' own strong will."

15. Under the headline "The right to resist occupation" columnist Kamel Al-Zuheiri wrote the following in a 07/19 editorial in the Sharjah-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000):

"...Hezbollah's resistance is as legitimate as those who resisted the aggression of Hitler and the Nazis, the British occupation in Egypt and India, and the French occupation of Algeria. George Bush is a strange president, one manipulated by Israel to serve its own interests. He thinks that, just by being President of the world's greatest country, he can do anything, including turning right into wrong."

16. Under the headline "A turning point," female columnist Dr. Amina Abu-Shihab wrote the following in a 07/19 editorial in the Sharjah-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000):

"...The lesson of the war on Lebanon is that Israeli aggression excludes no one, regardless of color, creed, political orientation or relationship with the West, from total liquidation if they even consider resistance to U.S.-Israeli forces."

17. Under the headline "American values," female columnist Magdi Mustafa wrote the following in a 07/19 editorial in the Sharjah-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000):

"... Democratic Senator Hilary Clinton lead demonstrations alongside Israeli lobbyists in front of the U.N. headquarters in New York, asking leaders to support Israel because Israel 'represents and protects American values, and defending Israel is the best way to defend our own values.'... They want us to thank the Israeli military which 'protects American values.' They also want us to

thank Israel for leading the rest of us to a new Middle East, possessed of American values."

¶8. Under the headline "Hezbollah...who is it fighting for?" columnist Mohammed Khalfan Al-Sawafi wrote the following in a 07/19 editorial in the semi-official Abu Dhabi-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"... July 12 will be remembered as a historical day in Hezbollah's history, a day when it lost its significant legitimate international support... On the Arab level, Hezbollah lost its Arab support when Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan labeled its actions as adventurism. On the Lebanese level, many Lebanese now hold Hezbollah responsible for the destruction they face. Hezbollah is now backed primarily by Syria and Iran. So whose interests does it serve?"

¶9. Under the headline "The catastrophe...and Hezbollah's responsibility?" Qatari columnist Mohammed Khalfan Al-Sawafi wrote the following in a 07/19 editorial in the semi-official Abu Dhabi-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"... Hezbollah's operation was a huge political mistake. Mr. Nasrallah should admit that much. No national or regional interest has been archived through his actions. Lebanon has become a disaster area. Syrian land is occupied. Syria has become increasingly isolated internationally. Iran's nuclear issues will now be sent to the UN Security Council. Exchanging prisoners is now harder than ever. What has Hezbollah achieved beyond putting Lebanon at risk? The lesson from all of this is that the armed militias in Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq have come to challenge conventional, legitimate authorities. They have soldiers, resources, active media offices and they think they should make critical decisions without the endorsement of the proper government."

¶10. On 07/19, Emirati columnist Mohammed Al Hammadi wrote the following in an untitled editorial in the semi-official Abu Dhabi-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"...Israel is inflicting collective punishment on Gaza and Lebanon. The world should not just sit back and observe such atrocities. Aren't these war crimes? Actions like destroying power plants, roads, bridges, airports, seaports, international highways and residential neighborhoods? Israel has attacked people fleeing from the war, carried out massacres and even used weapons banned by the international community. Aren't these war crimes or are they justified by the kidnapping of two soldiers?"

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